DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 444 621 JC 000 564

TITLE	Fast Facts 26-42.
INSTITUTION	Florida State Board of Community Colleges, Tallahassee.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	33p.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	College Students; *Community Colleges; Educational Finance; *Educational Trends; *Enrollment; Higher Education; *Institutional Characteristics; Student Characteristics; Student Needs
IDENTIFIERS	*Florida Community College System

ABSTRACT

The document is a compilation of Fast Facts on a wide range of issues affecting the Florida Community College System (FCCS) and higher education in general. It uses data extracted from a federal publication entitled "Answers in the Tool Box." Some of the topics that are addressed are as follows: important variables for student baccalaureate completion; serving the disabled; the economic value of a four-year degree; student transfer rates to institutions within the State University System; educational access and quality; FCCS student characteristics; distance education in the United States; freshmen survey on stress; state scholarships and grants in the FCCC; and perceptions of the public and parents on higher education. Data highlights include: (1) the number of disabled students increased by 13.9% between 1994-95 and 1998-99, rising from 14,418 to 16,426; (2) the number of blacks earning A.A. degrees increased by 58% between 1994-95 and 1998-99, Hispanic students earning A.A. degrees increased by 33%, and whites by 6%; (3) females earned 21% more A.A. degrees in 1998-99 than in 1994-95, and males 8% more; (4) the unduplicated headcount of A.A. graduates in the upper division of the Florida State University System increased from 48,417 in 1995-96 to 49,783 in 1998-99 (3%); and (5) FCCS grade point averages (GPAs) range from 2.8 to 2.9, while SUS GPAs remain at 2.9. (JA)

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Fast Facts 26-42

Florida State Board of Community Colleges

C. Maxwell

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State
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Fast Facts

FF-26 October 13, 1999

Answers in the Tool Box

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement recently released a publication dealing with the issue of degree completion. The publication, entitled *Answers in the Tool Box*, uses data from students' transcripts as the basis of a study about what variables are important for student baccalaureate completion. The following information is extracted from the Executive Summary of that publication. The complete document may be downloaded from http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Toolbox.

This study tells a story built from the high school and college transcript records, test scores, and surveys of a national cohort from the time they were in the 10th grade in 1980 until roughly age 30 in 1993. The story gives them 11 years to enter higher education, attend a 4-year college, and complete a bachelor's degree. In these respects—based on transcripts and using a long-term bachelor's degree attainment marker—this story is, surprisingly, new.

This study was motivated by [three] developments in higher education during the 1990s:

1.The growing public use of institutional graduation rates as a measure of accountability, and the tendency in public policy and opinion to blame colleges for students' failure to complete degrees and/or for failure to complete degrees in a timely manner.

2.An ever expanding proportion of high school graduating classes entering postsecondary education, and new federal policies encouraging even more students to enter or return to higher education. Our system is being challenged simply to maintain, let alone improve, college graduation rates.

3.The increasing tendency, overlooked in both policy and research, for students to attend two, three, or more colleges (sometimes in alternating patterns, sometimes simultaneously) in the course of their undergraduate careers.

Selected Findings

High School Background

The impact of a high school curriculum of high academic intensity and quality on degree completion is far more pronounced and positive for African-American and Latino students than any other pre-college indicator of academic resources. The impact for African-American and Latino students is also much greater than it is for white students.

Of all pre-college curricula, the highest level of mathematics one studies in secondary school has the strongest continuing influence on bachelor's degree completion. Finishing a course beyond the level of Algebra 2 (for example, trigonometry or pre-calculus) more than doubles the odds that a student who enters postsecondary education will complete a bachelor's degree.

Academic Resources (the composite of high school curriculum, test scores, and class rank) produces a much steeper curve toward bachelor's degree completion than does socioeconomic status.

College Attendance Patterns

Students beginning in highly selective 4-year colleges and those starting out in open door institutions have the highest rates of multi-institutional attendance, though for very different reasons.

The number of institutions attended by students has no effect on degree completion.

The fewer schools attended, the more likely the student was enrolled continuously, and the less likely a 4-year college was part of the attendance pattern. Students who move from one sector (2-year, 4-year, other) to another are the least likely to be continuously enrolled.

Degree Completion

For students who attend 4-year colleges at some time, the only form of financial aid that bears a positive relationship to degree completion after a student's first year of college attendance is employment (principally College Work-Study and campus-related) undertaken (a) while the student is enrolled and (b) for purposes of covering the costs of education.

While only 26 percent of students who began their undergraduate careers in community colleges formally transferred to 4-year institutions, their bachelor's degree completion rate was over 70 percent. The classic form of transfer, in which the student earns at least a semester's worth of credits before moving to the 4-year college, produces a very high likelihood of bachelor's degree completion.

Conclusions That Follow from These Findings

When nearly 60 percent of undergraduates attend more than one institution and 40 percent of this group do not complete degrees, institutional graduation rates are not very meaningful. It is not wise to

blame a college with superficially low graduation rates for the behavior of students who swirl through the system.

Analysis of institutional effects on degree completion is compromised when students attend two or more institutions. One wastes precious research time trying to figure out which type of experience in institution X had an impact if the student also attends institutions Y and Z. There are some exceptions to these principles, e.g. when the second institution involves a study abroad semester.

When the academic intensity and quality of one's high school curriculum is such a dominant determinant of degree completion, and both test scores and (especially) high school grade point average or class rank are so much weaker contributors to attainment, college admissions formulas that emphasize test scores and (especially) high school grade point average or class rank are likely to result in lower degree completion rates.

Produced by the Office of Educational Services and Research, Division of Community Colleges

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Fast Facts

FF-27 October 14, 1999

Serving the Disabled

A recent survey by the U.S. Department of Education shows that community colleges serve the majority of identified handicapped individuals enrolled in postsecondary education. Nationally, public two-year institutions enroll thirty-seven percent (37%) of all students attending a public or private two or four-year institution. This same set of institutions serves fifty-four percent (54%) of the students who identified themselves to the institutions as having a disability.

The most common disability is that of specific learning disability. Slightly over thirty-eight percent (38.5%) of the disabled students reported this condition. The second largest group of students was those with mobility/orthopedic impairment. Slightly over fifteen percent (15.8%) of the students were in this group. The remaining categories were health impairment/problem (12.9%), mental illness/emotional disturbance (9.1 %), hearing impairment (5.6 %), blind or visual impairment (4.2 %), speech or language impairment (1.2 %), and other or unclassified (12.7 %).

The Florida Community College System is well known for its commitment to disabled students. In 1998-99, 15,604 individuals with identified disabilities were served. This was 2.2% of all students served. Specific learning disability was the most common for Florida, as it has been for the nation. Thirty-six point two percent (36.2%) of the students were reported in this category. Physical impairment was second with 18.1%, slightly higher than the nation as a whole. The remaining categories were mental or psychological disorders (6.8%), visual impairment (6.6%), hearing impairment (5.0%), speech impairment (1.2%), and other or unclassified (26.1%).

Multiple services are offered to assist these students in their academic careers. These include course substitutions or waiver; alternative exam formats or additional time; sign language interpreters/transliterators; readers, classroom note takers, or scribes; and special career or placement services targeted for disabled students. Additional information about the exact services offered by the community college in your area can be obtained by contacting Ms. Deloris Massey, Director of Educational Opportunity Programs for the FCCS, or the disabled student coordinator at the institution.

More information on the national picture is contained in An Institutional Perspective on Students with Disabilities in Postsecondary Education, NCES 1999-046. The Fast Facts series is produced by the Office of Educational Services and Research, Division of Community Colleges, 1340 Turlington Building, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400. For additional information, contact Patricia Windham, Ph.D.

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Fast Facts

FF-28 October 25, 1999

The Economic Value of a Four-Year Degree

Everyone agrees on the "civility" value of pursuing higher education and most agree on the "economic" value, but a recent article in *Forbes* magazine suggests that it might be time to take another look at the economic side of the equation. "The Tyranny of the Diploma" by Brigid McMenamin in the December 28, 1998 issue, suggests that not everyone earning a four-year degree will benefit in terms of wages. The article begins with the example of individuals such as Bill Gates and Michael Dell. While it is clear that not all college dropouts will be as successful as these people, it is also clear that the major one pursues in college is important. Table 1 provides a salary comparison between five popular college majors and five popular occupations that do not require the degree.

Table 1

Average Monthly Salaries

College Degree		No College Degree Required	
Biology	$1,990	Real estate broker	$4,259
Social science	1,922	Insurance salesman	3,240
Liberal arts	1,733	Brick mason	2,713
Education	1,669	Legal secretary	2,258
Home economics	1,330	Machinist	2,115
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1993; Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1996			

Some other statistics included in the article:

- Today perhaps 30% of the work force is in jobs that by law or custom require at least a four-year college diploma.
- A hefty 21% of all degree-holders that work earn less than the average for high school graduates.
- You don't need a sheepskin for 70% of all jobs in the U.S.

Table 2 lists ten of the fastest-growing job categories that do not require a four-year degree.

Table 2

Ten of the Fastest-Growing Job Categories Not Requiring a Four-Year Degree

Occupation	Median hourly wage	Projected increase in number of jobs 1996-2006
Sales and related	$13.29	811,216
Machinist	$12.56	384,500
Clerical supervisor	$13.56	261,000
Maintenance repair	$10.42	245,800
Food service & lodging mgr.	$11.23	167,700
Licensed practical nurse	$12.00	148,400
Corrections officer	$12.73	103,300
Paralegal	$14.36	76,426
Police officer	$16.65	73,341
Vocational ed. teacher	$15.26	71,586

Source: Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor

Statistics: National Occupational Employment, Earnings, Training Database, 1996-2006.

The Florida Community College System is well suited to this dual need of tomorrow's workforce. Within its institutions, a person can obtain all of the training needed for any occupation listed in this article and/or the first two years of the preparation needed for all of the college degrees. This means that no matter which path you chose, you don't have to leave home to begin either training or traditional higher education.

A complete copy of the *Forbes* article can be obtained from their web site at http://www.forbes.com. The Fast Facts series is produced by the Office of Educational Services and Research, Division of Community Colleges, 1340 Turlington Building, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400. For additional information, contact Patricia Windham, Ph.D.

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Fast Facts

FF-29 November 5, 1999

Where Do Community College Transfers Go?

Florida's nationally known 2+2 system results in the annual transfer of thousands of community college students to various institutions within the State University System (SUS). There are two main ways of looking at these transfers. One is the snapshot approach, which considers all the former community college students enrolled in the SUS in a given year. The Articulation Report produced by the Bureau of Research and Information Services provides an extensive description of what is happening in the upper division of the SUS using this approach. A second method is based upon longitudinal tracking of a cohort. The SBCC has done extensive work with the Fall 1993 first time in college degree-seeking students, tracking them for five years. One outcome of this study was transferring to the SUS. Those transfer findings are presented below.

The longitudinal tracking study of the Fall 1993 FTIC cohort considered both how many students are transferring and to which institutions. Another aspect was whether this pattern was consistent among the major ethnic groups. Since the FCCS is the main entry point of minority students into higher education in Florida, of special concern was whether minority students are transferring at the same rate as the majority.

Overall, 16% of the cohort had transferred to the SUS by the end of the tracking period. These students were then divided into the major ethnic groups of black, Hispanic and white. Table 1 shows the overall transfer percent and the percent of transfers to each institution. The percent of overall enrollment at each university is also provided as a reference point.

Table 1

FCCS Transfers by Ethnicity and SUS Institution

Group	Overall	FAMU	FAU	FGCU	FIU
Black	9.9	19.6	11.9	0.0	25.2
Hispanic	18.7	0.3	7.5	0.3	62.6
White	16.3	0.4	10.5	1.3	5.1
Percent of Fall 1997 SUS Total E&G Enrollment	100.0	5.1	9.4	1.2	14.4

Group	FSU	UCF	UF	UNF	USF	UWF
Black	11.2	10.6	4.1	4.5	10.3	2.6
Hispanic	5.2	8.8	8.2	1.2	5.3	0.7
White	17.1	20.1	17.3	6.1	17.8	4.4
Percent of Fall 1997 SUS Total E&G Enrollment	14.6	13.9	16.5	5.5	15.7	3.9

Based upon the results of this study, Hispanic students transferred at a higher rate than the total cohort and blacks transferred at a lower rate. The majority of Hispanic students transfer to FIU. FIU is also the university of choice for black students, receiving one out of every four. In second place for Hispanic students is UCF, with FAMU in second place for blacks. White students tend to be under-represented at FAMU and FIU and over represented at UCF, with one in five transferring to that university. Undoubtedly the low transfer rates of FGCU are due to its only being open for one year of this study. Thus, there appear to be different transfer rates for both the different ethnic groups overall and to the different universities within the State University System.

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Fast Facts

FF-30 November 15, 1999

How are Disabled Students Faring the FCCS?

Enrollments and Awards 1994-95 through 1998-99

Introduction

One of the many distinct populations served by the Florida Community College System is that of disabled students. These students have comprised a small (2.2), but fairly stable percentage of the student body for the past several years. The students referenced in this report self-identified themselves as disabled as one step in obtaining support services from the college. This was the only type of identification contained in the FCCS Student Data Base (SDB) for 1994-95 through 1998-99. Beginning with the 1999-2000 reporting year, the SDB will also contain information on documented disabled students. Since documented and self identified are different ways of obtaining information, there may be a break in the trend lines at that point

Enrollments

The number of disabled students increased by almost fourteen percent (13.9%) between 1994-95 and 1998-99, going from 14,418 to 16,426. There was also a shift in the ethnic composition during this same time. In1994-95, minority students were twenty-seven percent of the total. By 1998-99, that percentage had increased to thirty-two. Females were also a growing percentage during this time. In 1994-95, females were fifty percent of the disabled students. By 1998-99, they were fifty-two percent. The total student body was thirty-four point six percent (34.6%) minority in 1998-99 and fifty-six point six percent (56.6%) female.

Awards

As with the enrollments, awards earned by disabled students have increased between 1994-95 and 1998-99. The number has risen from 1,285 to 1,481 or fifteen point two percent (15.2%), meaning awards have increased slightly faster than enrollments. There has also been a similar shift in the ethnic distribution of these awards. In 1994-95, whites earned eighty four percent (84.0%). By 1998-99, that percentage had declined to seventy-five point six (75.6%). Thus, minority students were increasing their award rate faster than they were increasing their enrollments.

Conclusions

The last five years have seen many positive changes in the outputs and ethnic and gender distribution of disabled students in the FCCS. Total numbers of both enrollments and awards have increased. The percent of minority and females has also increased. In fact, the ratio of awards to enrollments is slightly higher for disabled students than for the student body as a whole. This implies that the funds being spent on auxiliary services for these students are producing the intended outputs. Furthermore, the services should be maintained and improved where possible.

Disabled Students - Enrollments and Awards 1994-95 through 1998-99

System Totals

College	Year	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Indian	White	Total	Female	Male
System Enrollments	1994-95	156	2399	1235	116	10512	14418	7300	7118
	1995-96	162	2562	1320	140	11275	15459	7868	7591
	1996-97	185	2625	1338	158	10710	15016	7688	7328
	1997-98	202	2713	1406	132	11095	15548	7952	7596
	1998-99	222	2898	2061	120	11125	16426	8600	7826
System Awards	1994-95	9	96	93	7	1080	1285	645	640
	1995-96	7	119	88	7	1047	1268	644	624
	1996-97	15	134	107	10	1073	1339	716	623
	1997-98	25	165	117	13	1188	1508	795	713
	1998-99	22	185	137	16	1121	1481	766	715

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FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

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FAST FACTS

The Open Door Does NOT Mean "No Preparation Required"

FF-31 **December 15, 1999**

Introduction

The Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University, investigates a variety of issues related to the purposes, problems and performances of this type of institution. The October 1999 CCRC Brief looked at the relationship between high school students' expectations and their achievement in postsecondary education. Community colleges have long been accused of "cooling out" students' aspirations and keeping them from completing degrees. However, is that what is really going on?

Findings

There has been enormous growth in both the number of community colleges and the number of students served. "While four-year college enrollment doubled between 1960 and 1990, community- college enrollment increased five-fold in the same period, from 200,000 to over 1,000,000." [1] Unfortunately, this growth in open-door institutions has led some high school seniors to believe that what they do in high school does not matter because they can always attend a community college. In 1960, only work-bound students expressed the belief that they could attain their college goals without doing much in high school. By 1993, this belief was shared by both work-bound and college-bound students. "Their comments suggest that the vast expansion of community colleges over the past thirty years has contributed to their views: They see the 'second chance' of the two-year colleges as making high school effort less relevant."

While it is true that these low achieving students can enter a community college, they do not have a high probably of finishing. Data contained in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) study entitled "High School and Beyond" suggest that students with low grades (defined as Cs or lower) were only half as likely to finish as were students with high grades.

Internal research conducted by the Office of Educational Effectiveness and Research has shown this same type relationship between students ready for college level courses when they arrive, and those needing College

[1] All quotes are from "Unrealistic Plans and Misdirected Efforts: Are Community Colleges Getting the Right Message to High School Students?" Community College Research Center CCRC Brief, Number 4, October 1999. The Brief is available at http://www.tc.columbia.edu/~iee/ccrc.

Preparatory courses[2]. Work done by the Center indicates that good high school grades and spending time on homework can mediate much of the differences normally associated with SES and ethnicity.

Florida has long recognized the need for all students who plan to attend either a university or college to take the same coursework in high school. The Division of Community Colleges has worked with guidance counselors and sent letters to all eighth graders to inform both professionals and parents of this need. The DOE has taken a large step in the right direction by eliminating social promotion and requiring students to show they are prepared for the next grade. The K-16 work currently taking place in the State should go a long way toward helping students understand that going to college involves more than being accepted.

The 1999 budget allocation for the Florida Community College System included six million in funding for programs that increase the opportunities for various student populations to obtain access to postsecondary education. The goals of these Access Challenge programs include:

1. More students complete high school and receive a standard diploma;
2. More students are prepared to continue their education after high school;
3. More students actually go on to further postsecondary education; and
4. More students are retained and complete either a certificate and/or associate degree.

Collaborative efforts are necessary to increase the level of enrollment of prior year high school graduates continuing on to postsecondary education. The community colleges are working with public school districts in a three-pronged approach to meet this challenge:

1) Through activities designed to reduce the incidence of remediation, especially among first-time-in-college students;
2) Through activities designed to increase the opportunity for access of all students to postsecondary education, including minority and underrepresented populations, nontraditional students who must overcome obstacles such as childcare, disability, and schedule, and many others to whom access has been difficult in the past; and
3) Through activities to improve the preparation and continued education of K-12 teachers in preparing their students to meet state standards.

Some specific examples are listed below:

- Local articulation councils established through which the community colleges and public schools develop plans for collaborative activities to reduce FTIC remediation.
- Annual letter to 8th grade students and their parents encouraging students to take high school college preparatory courses needed for admission to the SUS, whether they plan to attend a community college or a university.
- Use of early CPT testing to analyze student readiness as well as identify needs and areas for improvement.
- Strengthen the academic and emotional preparation of weaker students in an effort to increase the number of students ultimately entering postsecondary education through programs and camps related to student success in college, career exploration and planning, business activities and partnerships, and coursework to meet CPT standards.
- Provide extended services to students to ease transition to the college environment such as student peer mentors, tutors, and advisors.

The point of continuing an education in a community college is to take advantage of the opportunity to move further along the educational pipeline. This happens best when students have made good use of their high school years and arrive ready to enter college level coursework.

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[2] "Outcomes: A Longitudinal Look at the Class of Fall 1993," Data Trend 13, September 15, 1999. This report is available from the SBCC, Office of Educational Effectiveness and Research.

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FAST FACTS

Who is the Typical FCCS Student

FF-32 **February 21, 2000**

Introduction

The Florida Community College System (FCCS) has been charged with providing a wide variety of programs and services to the citizens of Florida. Given this variety, the idea of a typical student may not be appropriate. After all, each individual brings a unique set of characteristics to the System that enriches the experiences of all. However, by using statistical analysis, a portrait of the average student can be created.

Description

The Student Data Base (SDB) contains information on the following demographic characteristics: gender, ethnicity, age, and disability. The average student would be female since 56.6% of the 1998-99 student body was female. White was the most prevalent ethnic group with 65.4 percent in that category. Black students comprised 15.8%, Hispanic 15.1%, Asian 2.6%, American Indian 0.5% and not reported 0.6%. The average age was slightly over 31 years. Forty-six point five percent (46.5%) of the students are 25 or less, with 7.6% 17 or under. The majority of this youngest group is being served via the dual enrollment program that allows qualified high school students to take college courses. At the other end of the spectrum, 5.9% are over 55. The student will not be disabled since only 2.1% of the student body reported a disability. Within this group, learning disabilities were the largest category.

Academic characteristics include enrollment status, i.e., full-time or part-time, class level, first-time-in-college (FTIC) status, transfer status, student intent, and program classification. Our typical student would be attending classes on a part-time basis. In Fall 1998, thirty-one percent of the students were full-time and sixty-nine percent part-time. If both Fall 1998 and Spring 1999 are combined, the full-time percentage drops to eighteen.

The student would be a returning freshman. About thirty percent of students attending in 1998-99 were classified as freshman. For the purposes of the SDB, a freshman is a student with less than thirty semester credits. Due to the part-time nature of most students, they may remain a freshman for several calendar years before accumulating the required thirty credits to become sophomores. Only about ten percent of the students in any given year are beginning their academic careers.

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The student would be attending the institution they started. Only about one-fourth are transfers from other institutions. They would have initially intended to earn an AA degree. Thirty-eight percent say this is what they want when they apply to an institution. The second largest group intends to earn an AS degree and almost ten percent of the students have no degree intentions. In keeping with their intent, the student would have been admitted to the AA degree program.

The final descriptive area is that of financial aid. The student would not be receiving any type of financial assistance. About one in five students attending the FCCS receives some type of aid. However, since not all students are eligible to receive aid, the percent of eligible students receiving aid is much higher. Pell grants are the major source of aid.

Thus, the typical Florida community college student is a 31-year-old, white female freshman attending part-time. She is seeking an AA degree and attending her original institution. She is not receiving aid nor is she disabled. While the Student Data Base does not provide this information, other studies have shown that she is also working and helping to support a family.

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FAST FACTS

AA Degrees Increase for All

FF-33 **February 21, 2000**

The One Florida Equity in Education Plan has focused attention on the most appropriate way to ensure that all segments of Florida's citizens have access to the benefits of higher education. The Florida Community College System (FCCS) has chosen to use the "open door" policy for admission. This "open door" means that the only institutional entrance requirement for students seeking an associate degree is the high school diploma. Ethnicity has never been part of the admissions process. However, having an inclusive policy does not negate the need to ensure that the policy is producing the desired results.

While students attend the FCCS for a variety of reasons, earning an Associate in Arts is the most often identified goal. One method of determining the effectiveness of the "open door" policy is to compare the AA degrees earned by ethnicity and gender. Table 1 provides such a comparison.

Male students had the smallest numeric change during this period, gaining only 740 degrees. Hispanic students were next with an increase of 951 or 33% compared to the 1994-95 reporting year. Blacks increased the number of AA's earned by 960 or 58%. This was the largest percentage increase of the groups considered. Whites had the largest numerical increase among ethnic groups at 1066, but the smallest percentage increase at 6%. Females increased their degrees by 21% or 2,659.

Table 1
Associate in Arts Degrees by Ethnic and Gender Categories

Category	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	Number Change	Percent Change
Black	1646	1814	2143	2873	2606	960	58
Hispanic	2874	3077	3806	4306	3825	951	33
White	17061	17963	18303	19895	18127	1066	6
Female	12917	13710	14813	17115	15576	2659	21
Male	9421	10002	10543	11253	10161	740	8

Note: Non-residents aliens have been included in their reported ethnic category.

Based upon the data displayed in Table 1, all major ethnic and gender segments of the student body have been making progress the past five years in increasing the number of AA degrees earned.

Institutional charts may be found as part of the web posting of this item. The Fast Facts series is produced by the Office of Educational Services and Research, Division of Community Colleges, 325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1344, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400. For additional information, contact Patricia Windham, Ph.D.

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FAST FACTS

"Developing the World's Best Workforce"

FF-34 **February 24, 2000**

In 1997, Tony Zeiss and Associates produced a monograph entitled "Developing the World's Best Workforce: An Agenda for America's Community Colleges" for the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). The first chapter of that monograph addresses the role of community colleges in the 21st century. The points listed below have been extracted from that chapter.

- The knowledgeable worker is absolutely necessary to America's ability to compete in a global economy. Essentially, if Americans want to live well, Americans must produce well.
- The demand for workforce education and training has never been greater.
- The role of American community colleges in providing quality workforce education for students and workforce training for employees has never been more important.
- Occupational education and customized workforce training is central to the economic and community development mission of American community colleges.
- Sixty-five percent of the new jobs by the year 2000 will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school, but below the baccalaureate level.
- According to a recent *Kiplinger Washington Letter*, the number of manufacturing jobs will continue to decline. They [represented] 17 percent of all jobs in 1996 and [will] decrease to approximately 8 percent by 2015.
- Today's workers need to be proficient learners, knowledgeable, skilled and communicative as never before.
- The League for Innovation asserts that community colleges are emerging as one of the major, logical providers of the workforce training required to revitalize and maintain the competitiveness of the nation's business and industry.
- Community colleges are the logical providers of key infrastructure training for a number of reasons:
  - Community colleges have a long history of providing vocational, technical and career training in fields that reflect the needs of their local economies.
  - Community colleges have a close working relationship with local constituents, including local business and industry.
  - Community colleges already provide a variety of training programs and services where the unmet need for worker training is the greatest.
  - Community colleges have considerable successful experience in programs and services for adult students.
  - Community colleges have invested in alternative delivery mechanisms that are well positioned to serve adult learners.
  - Community colleges have also invested heavily in support services for students.
  - A community college is located within commuting distance of more than 90 percent of the local population of the nation as well as within every congressional district.

The complete monograph may be purchased from the AACC via their web site. The Fast Facts series is produced by the Office of Educational Services and Research, Division of Community Colleges, 325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1344, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400. For additional information, contact Patricia Windham, Ph.D.

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FAST FACTS

Distance Education in the United States

FF-35 **March 25, 2000**

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has recently released a report entitled Distance Education at Postsecondary Education Institutions: 1997-98. The report is based upon the results of the second nationally representative survey of distance education conducted by NCES in winter 1998-99. That survey collected information about the 1997-98 academic year. The points listed below have been taken from the executive summary of that report.

- Evidence suggests that distance education is becoming an increasingly visible feature of postsecondary education in this country.

- About one-third of the nation's 2-year and 4-year postsecondary education institutions offered distance education courses during 1997-98.

- Distance education was more likely to be conducted by public institutions; 78 percent of public 4-year institutions and 62 percent of public 2-year institutions, compared with 19 percent of private 4-year and 5 percent of private 2-year. (All of Florida's public 4-year and 2-year institutions offer distance learning courses.)

- Course Offerings:
  (a) There were an estimated 1,661,100 enrollments in all distance education courses and 1,363,670 students were in college-level, credit-granting courses. Most of these were at the undergraduate level.
  (b) These students were enrolled in almost 55,000 different courses (54,470).
  (c) Seventy percent of institutions offered courses in English, humanities and the social and behavioral sciences, and 55 percent offered courses in business and management.

- Degree and Certificate Programs:
  (a) Eight percent of all 2-year and 4-year postsecondary institutions offered college-level degree or certificate programs that were designed to be completed totally through distance education.
  (b) This translated into an estimated 1,230 degree programs and 340 certificate programs.

- Technology:
  (a) Asynchronous Internet instruction, two-way interactive video, and one-way prerecorded videos were used by more institutions than other distance education technologies.
  (b) Public 4-year institutions were most likely to use two-way interactive video, while public 2-year institutions were most likely to use one-way prerecorded video.
  (c) The anticipated increase in Internet and interactive video technologies will make them a growing delivery mode among institutions.

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- Tuition and Fees:
  (a) About three-quarters of institutions that offered any distance education courses in 1997-98 charged the same tuition as for comparable on-campus courses.
  (b) Two-thirds reported that they did not add special fees to their college-level, credit-granting distance education courses.

- Changes:
  (a) Between Fall 1995 and 1997-98, the percentage of institutions offering distance education courses increased by about one-third, from 33 percent to 44 percent.
  (b) From 1994-95 to 1997-98, the number of course offerings and enrollments in distance education approximately doubled.
  (c) Taken together, these findings suggest that the expansion in distance education appears to be among institutions that have offered distance education for the past 3 years. These institutions have substantially increased the number of distance education courses, enrollments and degree and certificate programs that they offer.
  (d) The percentage of institutions using two-way interactive video and one-way prerecorded video were essentially the same in 1997-98 as in Fall 1995. The percentage of institutions using asynchronous Internet-based technologies, however, nearly tripled, from 22 percent in 1995 to 60 percent in 1997-98.

The complete report is available at the NCES web site, http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/index.asp. The publication number is 2000-013. The Fast Facts series is produced by the Office of Educational Services and Research, Division of Community Colleges, 325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1344, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400. For additional information, contact Patricia Windham, Ph.D.

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FAST FACTS

Freshman Feel Stress

FF-36 **March 31, 2000**

The 1999 Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) annual survey was completed by 364,546 freshman entering a national sample of 683 two- and four-year colleges and universities. This is the thirty-third year this survey has been given to first-time, full-time freshmen. The questions have changed slightly over time as different areas have been added. The results listed below have been taken from the highlights of the 1999 survey.

- Growing stress among college freshmen, especially women

  Record numbers of entering college students report feeling frequently "overwhelmed by all I have to do" (30.2 percent, compared with 29.6 percent last year and a low of 16.0 percent when the question was first asked in 1985). Almost one-fourth of the students surveyed reported there was "some" or a "very good" likelihood of working full-time while attending college. Women were almost twice as likely to feel this level of stress as men. More women were concerned that they may not have enough money to finish college and more find it very likely that they will need to get a job to pay for college expenses.

  A second possible explanation relates to the differences in how men and women spend their time outside of class. Compared to men, women spend significantly more time studying, performing volunteer work, participating in student clubs and tending to housework or child care responsibilities. In contrast, men spend significantly more time than women do exercising or playing sports, watching television, partying and playing video games. These findings suggest that women spend time on goal-oriented and potentially stress-producing activities, whereas men more often participate in activities that provide a recreational outlet and possible release from stress.

- Today's college freshmen appear to be more academically "disengaged" than ever before.

  This result is based upon the high percentage of students feeling frequently "bored in class," "came late to class," or who have "overslept and missed class or appointments." It is also reflected in the record low number of freshmen who report studying or doing homework six or more hours per week during their last year in high school.

- "Grade inflation" intensifies

  A full 34.1 percent of freshmen report earning an "A" average in high school, compared to 32.4 percent last year, and a low of only 12.5 percent in 1969. This increase in high school averages may have contributed to another phenomenon: record high levels of academic self-confidence. More of these students than ever rate themselves "above average" or "highest 10%" in academic ability, writing ability, public speaking ability, intellectual self-esteem, and leadership ability. Further, a near-record 49.5 percent expect to make a B average in college.

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- Declining commitment to social activism

  A record high 75.3 percent of freshmen performed volunteer work during their last year in high school, but long-term goals for social activism are on the decline. The percent of freshmen that feel it is very important or essential for them to "influence social values" fell to 35.8 percent, its lowest point since 1986. The desire to participate in community action programs also fell to its lowest point in over a decade (21.3 percent), and interest in becoming a community leader has dropped over four percentage points in the last four years - from 32.1 percent in 1996 to 28.0 percent today.

  Attitudes about race also reflect a declining social consciousness. The percent of students who are committed to "help promote racial understanding" declined for the third consecutive year, dropping to 28.4 percent, its lowest point since 1986.

- Growing Interest in Teaching and the Arts

  Freshman interest in elementary and secondary teaching careers rose to its highest point in over thirty years: 11.2 percent (15.7 percent of women, 5.6 percent of men), compared to 10.6 percent last year and a low of 4.9 percent in 1982.

  Students also express a growing interest in the arts and humanities. A record number of students aspire to become artists or performers (7.8 percent, compared to 7.0 percent last year and a low of 5.2 percent in 1975).

- Aging Freshmen

  While the majority of entering college freshmen continue to be the standard eighteen years of age, increasing numbers of students begin college at the age of nineteen (27.9 percent, up from 26.3 percent in 1998 and a low of 13.6 percent in 1967). Gender differences on this item are significant, with one in three freshman men (33.2 percent) starting college at nineteen, compared to less than one in four women (23.4 percent). While this trend might appear to mean that more students are delaying college entry, actually more first-time, full-time students than ever (95.4 percent) are entering college directly after graduating from high school. Instead, the growing number of 19 year old students may be the result of recent efforts to end the common practice of "social promotion" in high school--allowing students to advance to the next grade, regardless of whether the student is academically prepared.

As institutions welcome these new students, they need to be aware of these changing attitudes and possible misconceptions related to the amount of work required for academic success in college. They may also want to develop differing support systems to meet the varying needs of men and women.

The complete report is available from the Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, Mailbox 951521, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521. The Fast Facts series is produced by the Office of Educational Services and Research, Division of Community Colleges, 325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1344, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400. For additional information, contact Patricia Windham, Ph.D.

FAST FACTS

State Scholarships and Grants in the FCCS

FF-37 April 30, 2000

The state of Florida offers many different types of scholarships and grants to community college students. The Bureau of Student Financial Assistance created a spreadsheet for the Florida Community College System (FCCS) indicating the number of students and amount of money awarded for fifteen different programs. The vast majority of money and students are in the different components of the Bright Futures and the Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG) programs. Table 1 lists the various programs, the number of students served and the amount of money awarded in 1998-99.

Table 1

Florida Financial Aid to the FCCS in 1998-99

Program	Number of Students Served	Total Amount of Awards
Top Scholars	9	10,874
Academic Scholars	1,471	2,309,977
Merit Scholars	6,699	5,350,180
Gold Seal	4,596	3,401,503
Total Bright Futures	12,775	11,072,534
Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG)	12,728	11,180,518
Children of Deceased/Disabled Veterans	41	44,301
Chappie James Most Promising Teacher	145	191,250
Seminole/Miccosukee Indian	14	30,500
Rosewood Family	4	5,377
Occupational & Physical Therapy	1	4,000
Student Member	0	0

African Afro-Caribbean/Latin American Caribbean Basin (AAC/LACB)	4	37,240
Jose Marti	10	18,000
Florida Work Experience Program (FWEP)	188	450,296
Robert Byrd Scholarship	34	44,612
Overall Total (unduplicated headcount)	25,944	23,078,628

Overall, the FCCS was awarded just over 14% of the 1998-99 appropriation of $161,535,661. The average award was approximately $1,000 with the AAC/LACB awards being the highest. The Student Member category is zero due to the fact that the 1998-99 student member elected to attend a private institution with the approval of the DCC. Table 1 provides information only on scholarships and grants, and does not address the distribution of the millions of dollars in state guaranteed loans.

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Reference Tables

1998-1999 Community College - State Scholarship and Grant Program Expenditures by School

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FAST FACTS

Performance of Former FCCS Students in the SUS Upper Division Remains Consistent

FF-38 **June 21, 2000**

The Florida Community College System (FCCS) has been tracking the performance of its former students in the State University System (SUS) for many years. The attached tables show the performance on a variety of indicators for the past four years. Those indicators are headcount, GPA, percent suspended, graduation ratios, average SSH taken per term and average total SSH to degree.

The unduplicated headcount of AA graduates in the upper division of the SUS has increased from 48,417 in 1995-96 to 49,783 in 1998-99, an increase of almost three percent. SUS native students have increased from 28,701 to 35,807, an increase of almost twenty-five percent. Thus, while the FCCS AA degree holder remains the main type of student found in the upper division, the percentage represented by this type student has fallen from 42.8% in 1995-96 to 40.2% in 1998-99. All types of former FCCS students, both those with degrees and those without, represented 62.0% of the upper division in 1995-96. This had fallen to 57.6% by 1998-99.

The mean cumulative GPA has remained very stable for both former FCCS AA degree holders and SUS natives. FCCS GPA's have ranged from 2.88 to 2.91, while SUS GPA's have fluctuated from 2.92 to 2.94. The GPA distribution has also stayed relatively constant. The percent of GPA's at 3.0 and above has varied from 46.7% to 49.3% for FCCS AA students and from 47.6% to 49.3% for SUS natives. Similar stability is seen in the percent of students with GPA's less than 2.0. For FCCS AA students the range is between 9.6% and 9.9%. For SUS natives it is between 2.7% and 3.8%.

As expected with the different levels of students with low GPA's, FCCS AA students have a higher suspension rate than do SUS natives. The range for the former is between 2.4% and 2.9%, while the latter are between 0.7% and 1.0%.

The Articulation report is prepared on an annual basis and thus no longitudinal tracking is done. Therefore, instead of a true graduation rate, the report presents a graduation ratio, i.e., the number of graduates divided by the number of students in the category. The ratios for the FCCS AA students range from 24.8% to 25.9%. For SUS natives the range is between 27.4% and 29.0%.

The part-time attendance patterns of community college students continues for AA transfers in the upper division. SUS native students take an average of almost two more hours per term than do FCCS AA students. The native range is between 10.0 and 10.7, while the AA range is between 8.7 and 9.0. While two hours a term may not appear to be a lot, it means that to earn the 60 hours of upper division work, natives students need to enroll for six semesters and AA students must enroll for seven.

The average total hours-to-degree is very similar. Native students averaged between 133.9 and 135.2. AA students were between 138.0 and 138.5. Having such a small average difference is a positive indication that Florida's articulation agreement is working well. In addition, the average has consistently declined between 1995-96 and 1998-99. This implies that the efforts surrounding the various aspects of the Time-to-Degree legislation have resulted in more efficient paths toward a degree.

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FAST FACTS

Great Expectations: How the Public and Parents View Higher Education

FF-39 **June 21, 2000**

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education has recently released a report entitled "Great Expectations: How the Public and Parents - White, African American and Hispanic - View Higher Education." The executive summary of that report is reproduced below.

Finding One – Higher Education, More Important than Ever

Higher education is perceived as extremely important, and for most people a college education has become the necessary admission ticket to good jobs and a middle-class lifestyle. Parents of high school students place especially high importance on a college education, and African American and Hispanic parents give college an even higher priority than do white parents. All groups believe that the country should ensure that no qualified and motivated student is excluded from a college education because of the cost.

Finding Two – More Than a Piece of Paper

To the public, getting a higher education is much more than putting in time and walking away with a sheepskin – the public holds a long list of expectations for higher education institutions. Colleges should help students develop maturity, organizational skills and an ability to get along with others, and should provide specific skills, such as problem-solving and communication. People also have high expectations for the institutions themselves. They want institutions to keep the cost down, but they also want to ensure quality by hiring good teachers and holding students to high standards.

Finding Three – The Responsibility Rests with the Student, but Institutions Should Help Those Who Help Themselves

The public, in contrast to how it views K-12 education, tends to emphasize the responsibility of college students, but this does not mean that they exempt higher education institutions from any responsibility. This attitude is manifested in areas such as remediation and financial aid. The public expects schools to help students who are having trouble, but the initiative should come from individuals.

Finding Four – Paying for College Is Difficult but Doable

Despite the often-heard complaints about the high cost of higher education, most people believe that anyone who really wants a college education can get one. Parents say that they are worried about paying for their own children's education, but they also say that they are confident that their children will go to college and that they will work out a way to pay for it. Most people agree that people from low-income families have a more difficult time than others.

Finding Five – High Satisfaction, Low Familiarity---In Contrast with Leaders

The majority of the public believes that higher education is delivering a valuable service and that a college education in available to anyone who really wants one. At least for the moment, the public is satisfied with the nation's higher education, and people are much more likely to focus their attention on other issues that they perceive as more problematic. For a variety of reasons, most Americans do not know a great deal about the details of higher education administration and financing, and have not yet taken a position on some of the questions and debates about higher education that have engaged the nation's leaders.

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FAST FACTS

Postsecondary Students with Disabilities: Enrollment and Persistence

FF-40 **June 22, 2000**

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) issued a "Stats in Brief" for June 2000 that addresses postseconday students with disabilities. The Brief looks at enrollments, services and persistence. The Florida Community College System (FCCS) collects information on disabled students enrollment and persistence via the Student Data Base (SDB). Table 1 provides comparative information between the national data of NCES and Florida's data from the SDB.

Table 1
Types of Disabilities of Disabled Students Enrolled in 1995-96
(Percent)

	Learning	Orthopedic	Other	Hearing	Visual	Speech
National (NCES)	29	23	21	16	16	3
Florida (FCCS)	36	20	27	7	9	1

The two data sets are not strictly comparable since the national set allowed for multiple entries, while the Florida set classified students according to the major disability if the student reported more than one. The cases of multiple reporting in the National set were less than ten percent. It appears that the FCCS has a higher incidence of learning disabled students than the nation and fewer with hearing or visual disabilities.

Table 2
Attainment and Persistence of Fall 1996 FCCS Degree-Seeking FTIC Students
(Percent)

	Associate	Certificate	Transferred	Still Enrolled	Persistence
Non-disabled Full-time	14.4	3.5	9.5	56.5	62.2
Non-disabled Part-time	3.1	5.0	1.8	40.9	44.7
Disabled Full-time	10.1	4.4	4.7	53.4	57.1
Disabled Part-time	4.6	3.9	1.0	47.8	50.0

Due to differences in data collection, it is not possible to directly compare the national data on awards and persistence with that of the FCCS. An alternative is to compare the data on non-disabled students to that of disabled. Table 2 is based upon degree seeking students initially enrolled in Fall 1996 and followed-up through 1998-99 in the FCCS and tracked in 1997-98 and 1998-99 ih the State University System. There were 40,245 non-disabled degree-seeking first-time-in-college (FTIC's) and 820 degree-seeking disabled FTIC's. Fifty-one percent of the non-disabled were full-time in Fall 1996 and 50% of the disabled students.

The purpose of this comparison is to provide information on the initial academic careers of disabled students versus that of non-disabled students, not to produce true graduation or transfer rates for either group. Therefore, the follow-up period is much shorter than is normally used for tracking community college students. Table 2 indicates that during the first three years of attendance, about three times as many full-time non-disabled students earned associate degrees as did part-time non-disabled students. The ratio for disabled students was two-to-one. The ratio of students transferring was over four-to-one for full-time versus part-time for both non-disabled and disabled. The percent of students still enrolled in 1998-99 was higher for full-time non-disabled than disabled, but was lower for part-time non-disable compared to disabled. Overall, the persistence rate for non-disabled students was 53.6% and for disabled was 53.5%. National data had suggested that the persistence rate for non-disabled students would be several points higher than that of disabled students. Based upon these data, the Florida Community College System appears to be providing the type of environment needed by disabled students to persist in their academic career.

"Stats in Brief" are available from the National Center for Education Statistics by calling 1-877-433-7827 or http://nces.ed.gov/. The Fast Facts series is produced by the Office of Educational Services and Research, Division of Community Colleges, 325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1344, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400. For additional information, contact Patricia Windham, Ph.D.

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FAST FACTS

Average CPT Scores Increase

FF-41 **July 15, 2000**

The Articulation Coordinating Committee Standing Subcommittee on Student Achievement prepares an annual report on how well students are doing on placement tests and meeting the requirements related to college level academic skills. One component of that report is a chart indicating the average score earned by prior year high school graduates on the tests used for placement purposes. The chart includes information from 1993-94 to 1998-99. In 1993-94 several different tests were used. By Fall 1997, the Florida Community College System (FCCS) had gone to a single placement test, the Florida Common Placement Test, known as the CPT. In addition to adopting a common test for all 28 institutions in the System, there were common cut scores on the three components - mathematics, reading, and writing. If a student scores below the cut score for an area, they must be placed in College Preparatory courses in that area. Table 1 shows the average score earned on the CPT during this time-period.

Table 1
Average CPT Scores as Reported on the Student Data Base

	Mathematics		Reading		Writing	
Year	Average	Number	Average	Number	Average	Number
1993-94	52.7	7,741	69.5	7,735	76.8	7,768
1994-95	53.3	9,818	70.0	9,798	77.2	9,903
1995-96	53.0	11,972	70.8	12,526	77.6	12,620
1996-97	54.0	15,669	72.5	16,302	79.2	16,527
1997-98	55.9	18,445	73.9	18,812	80.4	19,068
1998-99	57.1	17,237	75.6	17,682	82.4	17,889

The increase in average score has occurred in spite of the increase in the number of students taking the test. Traditionally, the average score on a large-scale standardized test tends to decline as the number of students taking it increases. This has not occurred with the CPT. It is anticipated that these higher average scores will mean that more students are able to complete their required College Preparatory course work and continue into college level classes.

Note: Students who present scores on either the College Board's SAT-I or the American College Testing Program's Enhanced ACT test that meet or exceed the scores specified Rule 6A-10.0315, Florida Administrative Code, may be exempted from taking the Florida College Entry-Level Placement Test (CPT) at the option of the president of the community college.

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FAST FACTS

Florida Continues to be the Top Producer of Associate Degrees

FF-42 **July 20, 2000**

Community College Week recently released its annual report on the top one hundred associate degree producers in the nation. Fifteen Florida Community College System (FCCS) institutions are included in that list. Those institutions are

Miami-Dade Community College	- (1)
Valencia Community College	- (3)
St. Petersburg Junior College	- (5)
Hillsborough Community College	- (6)
Florida Community College at Jacksonville	- (7)
Broward Community College	- (8)
Palm Beach Community College	- (9)
Santa Fe Community College	- (14)
Brevard Community College	- (16)
Tallahassee Community College	- (22)
Daytona Beach Community College	- (33)
Pensacola Junior College	- (37)
Edison Community College	- (72)
Indian River Community College	- (77)
Manatee Community College	- (97)

In addition to overall graduates, *Community College Week* compiles a list of the top one hundred colleges for minority graduates. Again, Florida is well represented with the following institutions:

Miami-Dade Community College	- (1)
Valencia Community College	- (5)
Broward Community College	- (7)
Hillsborough Community College	- (15)
Florida Community College at Jacksonville	- (18)
Palm Beach Community College	- (28)
Tallahassee Community College	- (53)
St. Petersburg Junior College	- (67)
Santa Fe Community College	- (76)
Brevard Community College	- (98)

The full report contains additional information on selected degree areas and certificates. The report was published in the July 10, 2000 issue. Although the report did not give the total number of community colleges providing degree information, the American Association of Community Colleges lists 1,132 different community colleges in the nation.

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